

Show Stoppers

I don't need to remind most of you that America's ninth largest city is a stupendous place to visit. The last Golf Industry Show in San Diego held in 2004 (known then as the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America International Golf Course Conference and Show) proved to be a monster hit thanks to idyllic weather and the joy of strolling around downtown's then-emerging Gaslight District. Five years later, the major construction is mostly finished. Barring an El Nino-fueled weather fiasco, Feb. 8-12 should be a stellar week for this year's GIS.

While you can have a great time just amusing yourself around the convention center area with countless restaurants, shops and pubs, there's more worth exploring if you have time and, in all but one case, access to a car.

Here's what I'm talking about:

Petco Park tour: It's no Fenway Park, but as far as modern ballparks go, Petco is a gem. The home of the San Diego Padres is located just across the street from the convention center. The architecture exudes an interesting blend of modern polish, sandstone and flashes of quirky retro, highlighted by the historic Western Metal Supply Co. building hovering over left field. Tours include visits to the press box, warning track, bullpen, dugout and the luxury box level, with promises of top-of-the-park views of the Coronado Bridge, downtown and the border with Mexico.

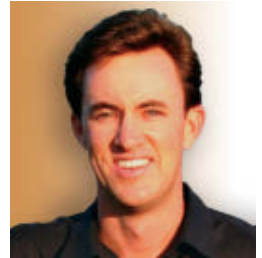
Off-season tours are available Tuesday through Friday at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., with an additional 2:30 p.m. tour on weekends. Price is \$9 for

WHEN IN SAN DIEGO FOR THE GOLF INDUSTRY

SHOW, FIND THE TIME TO VISIT THESE FAMOUS

LOCAL PLACES. YOU GOTTA TRY THE FISH TACOS!

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



adults, \$6 for seniors and \$5 for children under 12.

One of the all-time great breakfasts: To partake in this, you must drive to the Hillcrest area just north of downtown where the world-renowned Hash House A-Go-Go (619-298-4646) serves up massive, delicious portions of pancakes, eggs, omelets and, of course, the house hash tossed with crispy potatoes and topped with two eggs. Pancakes include blueberry pecan and blackberry granola, while the griddled French toast dipped in banana-cinnamon cream and topped off by pecan maple syrup will make you want to make a second home in San Diego. Warning: There are lines on weekends. And double warning: Lunch and dinner meals are great, too.

Torrey Pines paragliding: This isn't everyone's cup of tea, mind you, but if there's enough wind, a nice dollop of courage and \$150 in your wallet, the Tandem Flight program offers 20-25 minutes of paragliding over the cliffs of La Jolla with a highly trained instructor. You'll get killer views of Torrey Pines's fourth hole and the California coastline. The first-come-first-serve flights usually run from noon to 3 p.m. Just call 858-452-9858 in the morning to see if they're operat-

ing that day. All ages welcome and spectators can wait at the Cliffhanger Café. Cameras aren't allowed, but for an extra \$15 they'll take photos of you.

Torrey Pines golf shop: It's easy to pull in to now-historic Torrey Pines, home to the epic 2008 U.S. Open. Convenient 30-minute parking spots are offered and usually open if you just want to pop into the golf shop or walk over to the 18th green and see the par-5 that yielded Tiger Woods' epic final hole birdie. Also, for fans of unique architecture, a walk around the lodge at Torrey Pines is a must.

And now for fish tacos: If you're heading back to the convention center, stop off at Bluewater Seafood (619-497-0914) near the airport and easily accessible from Interstate 5. Featured on Food Network, all the food is stellar, but there's simply no excuse for passing on the fish tacos. At \$3.95 a taco or \$7.95 for two, you'll get huge portions of fresh swordfish, mahi mahi or shrimp with great sauce and cabbage. Tortillas come from the nearby El Indio, another great spot for cheap and tasty Mexican food.

Follow Shack, Golfdom's contributing editor, at www.geoffshackelford.com or via [Twitter.com/GeoffShackelford](https://twitter.com/GeoffShackelford).